

**BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2012**

**The bi-monthly meeting of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held on Monday, March 12, 2012, in the cafeteria of Kickemuit Middle School, 525 Child Street in Warren, RI. The Chairperson, John C. Bento, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:02 PM.**

**Present: John C. Bento, Chair, Paul Silva, Vice-Chair, William M. O'Dell, Treasurer, Karen A. Lynch, Secretary, Diana B. Campbell, Marjorie J. McBride, and John P. Saviano; Melinda L. Thies, Superintendent; Mario J. Andrade, Assistant Superintendent; Pauline A. Silva, Director of Administration and Finance; Leslie J. Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services; Mary N. Almeida, Director of Literacy and Title I; and Andrew D. Henneous, Esq., District Solicitor**

**Absent: Denise R. Arsenault and Susan Rancourt**

**OPENING BUSINESS**

**All present were invited to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC FORUM**

**Committee member Mr. Paul Silva informed the Committee that the Mt. Hope Robotics team, since winning awards at the state competition, has won more awards in recent competitions in Connecticut and New Hampshire. In Connecticut the team won the most prestigious award attainable in robotics, the Inspire Award, which is awarded for showmanship, comradery, community outreach and willingness to assist competitors; this earned the team the right to compete in the world competition to be held in St. Louis in April. Mr. Silva explained that each team has a coach/ mentor and there is none better than Mr. Ryan Garrity who won, and richly deserved, the Compass Award at the New Hampshire competition. The inspiration for the founder of FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), Dean Kamen, came out of his desire to create a different type of spotlight, other than athletes and movie stars, for kids to look up to; students involved in this program are most likely to go on to college and everyone of them can go “pro” because there is a job waiting for them. Mr. Silva then introduced Mr. Ryan Garrity.**

**Mr. Garrity thanked the Committee for allowing the presentation; he described the students as phenomenal. A major part of their success is due to their dedication and hard work, with several after school session lasting until after 10:00 PM; parent support is excellent. In addition to the Inspire Award, the team also won the Connect Award for connecting with the community and helping others at the competition. The group has built relationships and partnerships with**

local industries, like East Bay Manufacturing owned by Lou Victorino, and Jade Engineering, who allowed the students to use their high-tech machinery to create the parts they needed to precise specification. The Tater Bots team, who attended the competition only to support the other teams because they had already secured a spot in the national competition, ended up competing because of a no show, and won the event as Captain of the Winning Alliance. Mr. Garrity described the scoring matrix of the competition while three members of the Tater Bot team, Matthew Silva, Tao Sevigny and Connor McMullen, demonstrated their robot, having to use problem solving skills to make some unexpected adjustments. A new robot will be built for the national competition.

Mrs. Campbell asked about program funding and student participation. Mr. Garrity explained the high school mostly supports the program and funding for outside competitions is from a BWEF grant, fund raising and donations from Bristol and Warren Rotary Clubs and the Lions Club; parents are very supportive with transportation. Fifty to sixty students participate in the program, twelve to twenty of whom are very dedicated; twelve to eighteen students are at each competition. Mrs. Campbell told Mr. Garrity he is an inspiration and he makes the Committee very, very proud. Mr. Silva pointed out that Mr. Garrity coaches three teams from Mt. Hope and gives time and effort to a regional team; he even writes the robot number on his head which he shaves before a competition, and the students and supporters dress up and bring themed props.

**In response to Mr. Saviano, Mr. Garrity said he expects it will cost approximately \$11,000 to attend the national competition; fundraising will be part of community outreach. Mrs. McBride reminded everyone that Mr. Garrity is a “home-grown product.” Mr. Bento asked if there is anything the School Committee or administration can do to assist with community partnerships; Mr. Garrity said any suggestions for ideas or recommendations of companies that might allow students to make the parts they need would be appreciated; although East Bay Manufacturing is willing, their hours of operation are prohibitive. Mrs. Campbell suggested a letter of thanks and appreciation be sent to these companies from the School Committee. Mr. Garrity said custodian Michael Santos donates money to the program because of his high regard for it. Mr. Garrity makes sure the students express appreciation and plaques are given to supporters.**

**Mrs. Thies said this evening is a demonstration of theories in action, the STEM initiative is evident; the partnerships with industry are part of her vision once proficiency in literacy and mathematics is established; she thanked Mr. Garrity and his students. Mr. Garrity has discussed with RIASP President, Pat Hines, the possibility of visiting other schools throughout the state that do not offer robotics.**

**NECAP SCORES PRESENTATION**

**Superintendent Thies stated NECAP is our measured assessment that measures how we perform against other districts in the state as well as other states. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Andrade, opened the presentation saying we do have things to celebrate. This information is part of the data we look at to create our vision to move forward. The middle school is our spotlight of success; he introduced Mrs. Beth Hayes, Interim Principal of Kickemuit Middle School.**

**This Year:**

- 8TH GRADE READING  
UP 7% FROM LAST YEAR**
- 8th GRADE WRITING  
UP 8% FROM LAST YEAR**
- 8TH GRADE MATH  
UP 19% FROM LAST YEAR**

**What It Means**

**THIS YEAR'S 8TH GRADERS AS A GROUP:**

- SCORED HIGHER THAN THEY EVER HAVE IN READING**
- SCORED HIGHER THAN THEY EVER HAVE IN MATH**
- SCORED HIGHER THAN THEY EVER HAVE IN WRITING**

**What Did We Do?**

- **Common Assessments:** Ensuring equal access and opportunity for all
- **KCAP:** Students practice and use their writing strategies in every class they take at KMS
- **Task Validation:** Trained teachers check all common assessments for validity and level of rigor
- **Common Threads:**
  - o Professional learning communities
  - o Examine GLEs and GSEs and Power Standards
  - o Examine and increase the level rigor
  - o Common understandings of proficiency

**Making Sure We Have . . .A SHARED  
VISION  
MISSION  
AND GOAL**

**What Will We Continue to Assure Success in the Future?**

- A shared vision, mission and goal
- Professional learning communities
- Examine GLEs and GSEs and Power Standards
- Examine and increase the level rigor
- Common understandings of proficiency
- Common Assessments
- KCAP
- Task Validation

## **BOOST**

**Targeted intervention for those with specific need.**

**An opportunity to add advanced work for many of our students.**

### **8th Grade Math**

#### **First Quarter Math Navigator**

- One 8th grade class taught a unit titled Decimals and powers of 10 to 23 students.**
- The average pre-test was 64% correct.**
- The average post-test was 95% correct.**
- 100% of the students in the class showed improvement from pre to post test.**
- The average change was 30%.**

**Mary N. Almeida**

**English Language Arts & Writing**

### **NECAP 2011**

- NECAP (New England Common Assessments Program) grades 3-8, and 11**
- Required by NCLB (ESEA Legislation) of 2002**
- 2011 is the 7th year of NECAP testing.**
- NECAP provides the district & schools with valuable data for identifying student needs.**
- NECAP provides important data for evaluation of our current**

**curriculum, assessments, and instructional practice.**

- **NECAP student results are reported in Levels of Proficiency**

- 4 - Proficiency with Distinction,**

- 3 - Proficient,**

- 2 - Partially Proficient, and**

- 1 - Substantially Below Proficient**

**2005-2011 Reading Proficiency**

**By School - Grade 4 – Testing Year**

**2005-2011 Reading Proficiency By School Grade 5 – Testing Year**



## **NECAP Reading District Results by Cohort**

### **BWRSD Literacy Action Plan**

**Focus: “Professional Learning Community” committed to a deep understanding of teaching and learning and continuous improvement for all students.**

#### **Curriculum:**

- Monitor the full implementation of the K-8 ELA Curriculum through the development of a rigorous local assessment system with a focus on transition to the Common Core Reading and Writing ELA Standards.**
- Assure the alignment of K-5 research-based reading and writing programs (SIPPS, Making Meaning, and Being a Writer) to the Common Core Standards.**

## **Assessments:**

- **Continue to develop K-8 Common Writing Tasks and Formative Assessments across content area disciplines for Benchmarking and Looking at Student Work (LASW).**
- **Provide embedded professional development on writing assessments with a focus on text-evidence and analysis supported by school-based task validation teams.**
- **Continue training in reading assessments (MClass 3D and DIBELS Next) for benchmarking, monitoring student progress, and targeted intervention strategies.**
- **Provide further training for 4th to 9th grade teachers in MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) to monitor growth in reading and language arts.**

## **Instruction:**

- **Professional development for teachers in explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and writing through Keys to Literacy training.**
- **Training for K-12 teachers, reading specialists, and special educators in targeted reading and writing interventions to fully support students as part of the RTI and PLP process.**
- **Continue to promote the Literacy Lab Classroom in grades K-12 as exemplary models of “Best Practice,” the workshop model, and differentiated instruction.**

## **Community:**

- **Provide Summer Literacy and Numeracy Program for students with academic needs.**
- **Increase community collaborations with RWU, East Bay Senior Center, Mosaico, Rogers Free Library, George Hail Free Library, and BWEF to develop partnerships that support student learning.**
- **Increase Family Involvement by working with principals, PTO's, and the Title I Parent Advisory to provide workshops and family events that support literacy.**

**Mario J. Andrade, Ed.D.**

**Mathematics NECAP Presentation**

**District and State Math Data – Grade 12**

**Grade 3 Math Data**

**District and State Math Data – Grade 4**

**Grade 4 Math Data**

**District and State Math Data – Grade 5**

**Grade 5 Math Data**

**District and State Math Data – Grade 6**

**Grade 6 Math Data**

**District and State Math Data – Grade 7**

**Grade 7 Math Data**

## **District and State Math Data – Grade 8**

### **Grade 8 Math Data**

## **District and State Math Data – Grade 11**

### **Grade 11 Math Data**

### **Moving Forward**

- **Use data better**
- **Focus our goals**
- **Deepen Content knowledge and strengthen instructional strategies**
  - **Professional Learning**
  - **Math Curriculum Development**

- **Implement deeply: every student, every classroom, every day.**
- **Monitor and provide feedback and support**
- **Stress continuous improvement**

## **FOCUS**

### **English Language Arts / Literacy**

- **Building Knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts**
- **Reading and Writing grounded in evidence from text**
- **Regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary**

### **Mathematics**

- **Focus strongly where the CCSS focus**
- **Coherence: think across grades, and link to major topics within grades**
- **Rigor: require conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with intensity**

**Superintendent Thies commented this is a wake-up call; she has concerns about the reading and writing program we have been implementing, perhaps becoming complacent and having lost site of the standards and is convening a summit regarding our literacy program; we need to use our assessment tools more wisely and move forward with an action plan.**

**Dr. Andrade commented that although much of this information is bleak, looking at the trends, we are moving in the right direction and we have systems and structures in place to propel us to the next level; the proficient with distinction numbers are increasing; we just received notification from RIDE of a \$17,000 award to strengthen our math program.**

**Mr. O'Dell asked if there is any evidence of the outcome before the test is given. Dr. Andrade explained knowledge and skills are measured on a daily and weekly basis so there is a pulse on where we are; however, this year we were more surprised and in response to that fact Dr. Andrade feels we have to be more focused on those systems of structure; these assessments do not match the grade expectations. Yet 75 to 80 % of our students are proficient so we must not become complacent and work toward reaching the next level.**

**Mrs. McBride is more concerned about the “partially proficient” (2) and “substantially below proficient” (1) numbers; she likes the Superintendent’s idea of changing strategies. Mrs. McBride is disappointed in these scores and expects not to be as surprised next year. Dr. Andrade confirmed that attention is being given to the 1s and 2s; Mrs. Anderson and the SPED teachers are responding; the standards are written for the students, not the teachers.**

**Mr. Saviano commented that public perception is extremely**



important; at one time our elementary schools had a very good reputation and our middle and high schools were perceived as not very good, then our high school improved, and now our middle school is performing well but our elementary schools are falling. He said people cannot afford private schools like they used to and are relying on us to use their tax dollars to provide the best education we can. This information is disheartening; the majority of our employees are the best you can find and we must carefully focus so as not to make a mistake because the children's futures depend on this. Dr. Andrade agreed we do have the right teachers and that we must not be complacent; we are not satisfied with 80% or 92% proficiency; we are focusing our goals so every student is challenged each day. Mr. Saviano asked if administration plans on visiting other districts who are successful to see their strengths. Dr. Andrade replied it is not about stealing and it is important to create ownership within our District; we are partnering with Tiverton and other nearby districts on certain initiatives and curriculum directors meet and visit other districts regularly.

Mrs. Campbell asked for the New England scores for a comparison. Mrs. Thies will provide this information; she mentioned that Rhode Island has always lagged behind the other states but recently is trending up; although this conversation is difficult, it is honest and we want to face this full on. Dr. Andrade added that when we see dips we corral all our resources and intervene immediately; the summit is April 13; we will not have the same conversation next year

at this time.

Chairman Bento thanked Superintendent Thies, Dr. Andrade and Mrs. Hayes and commended the staff for being proactive and not in a vacuum; he requested a report back to the Committee after the summit. Mr. Bento also thanked Mrs. Hayes for sustaining the Middle School during the void in leadership and asked that his comments be passed on to the Middle School staff.

## **FY13 BUDGET**

Mr. O'Dell asked if there were any lingering questions about the budget request; it is important for everyone to feel comfortable about the budget with Joint Finance 72 hours away. Mrs. Lynch commented it feels like we were here two weeks ago having the same conversation; she has continued concerns about moving forward with a budget that depends on contract savings when the contract has not been passed; she is not sure how we will be able to avoid cutting programs and feels we put the "cart before the horse" using savings that are not guaranteed. Mrs. Thies responded she had previously mentioned we are protected under the negotiation process; we are moving to arbitration at this time; salary and benefits are not binding so the District has latitude. In response to Mrs. McBride, Mrs. Silva stated the budget process is a snapshot in time; Administration is very comfortable with this conservative budget.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

### **Joint Finance Committee Meetings**

**Mr. Bento said the first meeting is this Thursday, March 15, 7:00 PM in the Kickemuit Middle School Auditorium; it will be strictly informational driven with only administration and the Committee permitted to speak for the purpose of presenting information. The second meeting is March 27 at 7:00 PM at the Mt. Hope High School Auditorium; public comment will be allowed.**

### **Bodacious Bee**

**Mr. Bento thanked the Bristol Warren Education Foundation for an outstanding Bodacious Bee; representing the School Committee were Mrs. McBride, Ms. Mary Almeida and himself. He thanked all the school groups that participated.**

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION – 9:37 PM**

**MOTION: In accordance with open meetings law 42-26-5(a)(2), at 9:37 PM Mrs. McBride motioned to go into Executive Session for an update on BWEA Contract Negotiations and Council 94 Contract Negotiations; Mrs. Campbell seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The Chair announced no decisions will be made during the Session and no further business or action will take place when open session resumes except to adjourn.**

**RESUMPTION OF MEETING – 10:11 PM**

**Mr. Bento reported that no action was taken in Executive Session.**

**ADJOURNMENT – 10:12 PM**

**At 10:12 PM Mrs. McBride, seconded by Mr. Saviano, motioned to adjourn. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Karen A. Lynch, Secretary**

**/c**